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and children. Sometimes, in the absence of his brother in town, a man may be consulted by his brother's wife, but he has no real right over her. For a man to beat his brother's wife or order her about, as is said to be the case among Pondo, is quite unheard of. There is nothing special in the relationship between sisters, except that they may marry the same husband, for, quite apart from considerations of the sororate, it is thought at all times good to marry sisters, who will be less liable to make quarrelsome fellow-wives than unrelated girls. Obligations towards classificatory sisters and brothers, children of the mother's sister or father's brother, are not the same as those to brothers by the same father, and the tie is not nearly so close.

Lovedu society is characterized by a very special relationship between brother and sister, a relationship that is given shape to and maintained by the Lovedu pattern of bride-price involving marriage with the mother's brother's daughter and supplemented by the role of women in the religious system. With this are also bound up the close links between two groups of people, the *vamakhulu* and *vaguhulu*—a man's own people and those of his mother or wife. The linking of uterine brothers and sisters in pairs, in order that the brother may obtain a wife with the cattle received for the sister, creates this special relationship between them and obliges the man to send his daughter to marry at his sister's place. No man will accept a suitor for his daughter until he has ascertained whether his linked sister wants the girl or not, for though in general it is the sister's son who marries the girl, it is the sister who receives a bride to stamp for her and lessen the labours of her old age. The sister has, in fact, a legal right to the girl. If the girl were to run away or be married to some one else, the court would support the father's sister's claim to the girl or the return of the cattle her brother used. Legally, it is even possible for the sister to dissolve the marriage of her brother by demanding back these cattle, but in practice this is rarely found. It is a common custom for a bridal party to call in at the village of the sister, by means of whose cattle the bride has been obtained, 'to show her the girl who is to bear a bride for her son'. A goat will then be slaughtered by her husband for the bridal party to show their pleasure in the marriage. A value that is constantly being expressed in Lovedu society is that it is fitting and desirable for a girl to 'cook for' her father's sister.

The house of the brother is thought to have been created by the sister whose cattle made the marriage possible. That is why, when he builds a new village, it is the sister who has to draw the magic circle of protection which renders it safe from witches. When the sister visits her old home, it is in the house of this wife that she will 'put her things' and make herself at home and, when she is called to beer, she will be given a special pot in the house of this wife. The sister even wields a certain amount of authority in the house of her brother, as was well illustrated at a gathering we attended where the man of the house was quarrelling with his wife about an uninvited guest. In the midst of the uproar a voice was heard: 'This is my village which I have built. I will have no unseemly behaviour here.' It was the sister rebuking her brother, who subsided immediately and went on with the ceremonial as if nothing had happened. So strong

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than the chief wife, plays little part in a man's life; she is merely a female relative to whom a certain amount of respect and attachment is due. Often a woman's son marries daughters of several of her brothers. It is, however, only to the daughter of that brother who used her cattle that she has a right—has, as the Lovedu put it, an 'entrance' to his village.

In view of the position of sisters and brothers later in life, one would not expect great familiarity or freedom between them during their childhood. Brother and sister may talk freely to each other, but if they rollick together their parents will stop them. Hence the riddle, 'What is it that is at hand and yet beyond reach?' (*Kha ntsita khi e ma?*) The answer, 'The breast of my sister,' refers to the playful catching hold of the breasts of girls by young boys, which is taboo in case of a sister. In strong contrast to the free, yet proper, relationship between brother and sister stands the joking relationship between cross-cousins. Derived from the brother-sister relationship is that of the father's sister, who is accorded honour and respect by the children of the house she has established. The term *khadi* is used loosely to denote either father's sister or eldest sister, for it is the eldest sister who will take over the religious functions of the father's sister after her death.

A well-marked characteristic of Lovedu society, one that clearly distinguishes it from the strictly patrilineal Zulu, Xhosa, and Pondo, is the importance of the mother's side of the family. Nothing of interest or importance takes place without their presence; even at the annual harvest beer offerings given to the gods on the father's side, relatives on the mother's side, who are not concerned in the religious aspect of the ceremony, will be present for the beer and social amenities. Important in maintaining close links between a man and his mother's relatives are the bonds of interdependence between the families of a brother, and the sister whose cattle he used. The sister's son is a potential son-in-law, who will be accorded great honour in the household of his mother's brother. A man's mother may also be the *khadi* who has to go and make offerings in the mother's brother's household, and in her absence her son might officiate for her. Later, when a man is engaged to his mother's brother's daughter, there will be gifts of beer from the girl's family. They are thus bound together by a variety of links.

But the greatest of all bonds between a man and his mother's side of the family is conceived by the Lovedu to be one of love. There is a saying, usually quoted by women, '*Wa mma u sme; wa rare gi mabahataka*,' which, freely translated, means, 'Love lies on the mother's side of the family; ownership on the father's'. One's relationship with the mother's side of the family is modelled on that towards a mother and is much influenced by the petting and spoiling received at the hands of the maternal grandmother, with whom most children spend a few years of their life, generally soon after the birth of a younger brother or sister. Every child recalls with delight the good time he had when at his mother's brother's village with his mother's mother; how she treated him to tit-bits, how she scolded or beat only her son's children if her grandchildren quarrelled and fought. For, it is said, a woman loves her daughter's children (who only come on visits) far more than those of her

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602 son (whom she has always with her). The mother's side of the family,
[736] no doubt because of this love, are thought to be peculiarly suited to the rearing of a child whose mother has died. Such a child is, in Lovedu society, never left in the hands of a fellow wife of its mother, but goes to its mother's mother, if she is alive, or its mother's brother or even a mother's sister—any one, in fact, an the mother's side who is kind-hearted enough to wish to rear an orphan.

● 604 In constrast to Shangana-Tonga, there is in Lovedu society no joking relationship between a man and his mother's brother. Your mother's brother may be kind to you, but you have to show him respect: if he asks you to go on a message or to help him in the fields you cannot refuse; while, if he needs you, you may be sent to herd for him or help nurse his small children. Moreover, he may one day be your father-in-
605 law and his wife your mother-in-law. The people whom one is privileged to tease to one's heart's content, and with whom one may exchange ribald jokes, are one's cross-cousins, the children of one's mother's brother and father's sister or their children, cross-cousins once-removed, a generation below. When very young, a child may be conditioned to this type of easy relationship by being given a stick and told, 'Go and beat your cross-cousin. Show him your cousinhood,' whereupon he is expected playfully to beat his cousin. If the cousin cries, they will pacify him, saying, 'Gracious! How can you cry? Don't you know it's your cousin? You too can beat him some other time.' Or they will give him a stick and say, 'Go and avenge yourself.' Whenever one finds people behaving uproariously in each other's company or calling out vulgar jokes, one can be quite sure they are cross-cousins. Cross-cousins marry each
[582] other; but while cases of a man marrying his father's sister's daughter sometimes occur, specially in the royal family, they are regarded as not quite regular and mother's brother's daughter marriage is by far the most usual. When a man tries to make love to his father's sister's daughter, she may tease him, saying, 'Away with you. We marry you, not you us. We are the husbands who find wives in your family.' The joking relation-
[584] ship between a man and his cousin gives place, immediately marriage negotiations are begun, to one of strict avoidance between prospective bride and groom and a certain amount of respect even between the boys in the two families. Men say they can often tell by the attitude of their cross-cousin that there is an understanding between him and their sister even before negotiations have begun.

602 Relatives-in-law are quite as important as relatives by blood. Where marriage with the mother's brother's daughter has taken place, the marriage strengthens an existing blood link, giving far greater meaning and intimacy to the bond. The importance of relatives-in-law lies in the fact that there is conceived to be a lasting bond between the two families for generations to come, since where a man has married there his son will find a wife. The bond is kept alive by various social usages, not least among which is the beer that is always passing (about once a year, unless the harvest is bad) from the village of the wife's family to that of their son-in-law. Moreover, a man's relatives-in-law become to his children the mother's side of the family, which plays so important a part

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231 creating and maintaining the all-important social relationships and realignments in the social structure that arise from marriage. Cattle are not 'gods with the wet nose' as among Tswana, but they may be dedicated to the ancestor spirits.

433 The economy is largely a subsistence one. A man should have enough
556 for his family's needs as well as to entertain friends and neighbours with beer to maintain his good name and reputation for liberality, and to fulfil his kinship obligations. But accumulation of goods is frowned upon: in any case, in the absence of markets or methods of preservation of the crops, an
436 economic incentive is lacking. Payment for most services, even that of a
431 doctor, is made in beer. Exchanges on the whole are usually not motivated by differential needs but by goodwill, the obligations of kinship, and the
476 general emphasis upon long-run reciprocity; they are for the most part not business transactions but gift exchanges. Kin and neighbours co-operate in work parties for weeding, reaping, building. Helpers are honoured as workers (*vashumi*) and treated to beer at the end of the day, yet they cannot be said to receive any specific reward, for the gate-crashers (*vahobedi* or beggars), who join the party when it repairs to the home of the host for beer, drink calabash for calabash with the workers. In ploughing partnerships, in which each of the parties contributes his services or some commodity, there is complete disregard of equivalence between what is contributed by a partner and the service he is entitled to. Reciprocity operates through the instrumentality of economic goods, but it owes its significance as a moral force to the interdependences that arise from the social and political structure.

612 The society is patrilineal and marriage patrilocal, but cognates, agnates, and affines are not segregated into distinctive groups; each category overlaps to such an extent with the others, through cross-cousin marriage and other factors, that both structurally and functionally it is the bilateral kin-groups that are significant.

582 One of the basic features of the social system is the linking of brother and
583 sister whereby the cattle (*munywalo*) coming in from the marriage of a sister are allocated to her brother to enable him to marry a wife. This cattle-link-
●604 ing of brother and sister is co-ordinated with cross-cousin marriage and an alignment of lineages into wife-providers and wife-receivers. That a man is expected to marry where his father has married or, more accurately, where his mother's marriage cattle have been used to establish a 'home', is the inevitable consequence, according to Lovedu conceptions, of the right of a sister to her cattle-linked brother's daughter as a daughter-in-law, who will cook and stamp for her and care for her in her old age. The arrangement implies that this girl should marry the son of the cattle-linked sister
[588] of her father, but should there be no such son her paternal aunt may nevertheless 'marry' her, in which case she will bear children by some person appointed by the aunt to act for her non-existent son or 'pick them up' as she wishes.

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see. But the fruits of her labour go to swell the property only of that unit of the lineage which constitutes the wife's own 'house', the independence and rights of which must be respected even by the husband.

Bride-price generally consists of some five to eight head of cattle, a number of goats and money (to the extent of at least £5). Today people sometimes pay a sum of money instead of cattle—£40 in a recent marriage. This represents eight head of cattle, bride-price cattle having been regarded as equivalent to £5 each, irrespectively of market prices, for the past fifty years at least. The amount given is, however, never a fixed one as the passing of bride-price initiates a continuous relationship of gift exchange between the two families concerned and the marriage puts the bridegroom under a lifelong obligation to extend economic help to his wife's people. '*Monoalo a o fede*—bride-price is never completed', it is said. When the wife's people have to pay a fine, if they need cattle or goats for the marriage of a son, they will approach their *tsetse* (or *muduhulu*)—son-in-law. The man who has provided a wife has given something 'bigger than cattle' and is in this sense in a superior position. On the other hand the son-in-law (*muduhulu*) or wife-receiver is accorded great honour by his wife's people and once a year at least receives a gift of beer and grain. The relationship is one of reciprocity and the son-in-law must for his part also show respect for his wife's people. He must ever be ready to grant their requests and may never refuse. There is no evidence for Leach's suggestion that the Lobedu have a 'kind of Kachin structure in reverse' with a 'strong tendency for the wife-receiving group to rank the higher'.[1] In endogamous unions in the Lobedu royal group both husband and wife may be members of the same lineage. Lobedu society is, moreover, not a stratified society though the royal lineage enjoys great prestige.

Fully to understand Lobedu marriage one must approach it also from the point of view of the woman. Usually a uterine brother marries a wife with the cattle that have accrued from his sister's marriage. This sometimes happens in other tribes too. But where the Lobedu situation seems to be distinctive is that every woman whose marriage-cattle have been used to

[1] Leach, 1951.

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provide a bride, whether for a brother or other relative or even a stranger, has a moral right to a daughter-in-law from the 'house' established by her cattle. Even though it was her husband who provided the cattle and it is usually he who is said to be 'following the tracks of his cattle' when such a girl is obtained for his son, the wife's right to the services of the girl are such that even if the husband himself, instead of the son, were to marry this girl (which quite often is the case, i.e., wife's brother's daughter marriage) this bride would be attached to her house and would cook for her as though she were the mother-in-law.

So strong is a woman's moral right to her cattle-linked brother's daughter to come and cook for her in her old age that even if she has no son she can, especially if her husband is dead, 'marry' the girl herself, using a daughter's bride-price. The Lobedu themselves phrase it as marriage of a woman to a woman. In reality it is in this case the marriage of a girl to a fictitious son of the woman who is said to be marrying her. Such a bride is called *noeji* (daughter-in-law) by the woman, who is 'grandmother', to any children born to the girl. The children take the surname of the husband of the woman just as though her son had married the girl. A woman who practises as a doctor and earns money can marry a girl with her own cattle. Here too the children (whether by an allocated man or born 'in the bush') take the lineage name of the husband of the woman who 'married' their mother. They are of his lineage but belong essentially to the 'house' (*mosha*) of the woman who married their mother.

A woman may also 'marry' a girl on behalf of her own lineage —for a deceased or non-existent brother. This is done where an heir is needed or where a brother has died before marrying the girl who was 'born for' or engaged to him as in the case of Thepize in Figure 1.

It is the source of the cattle that pass which determines the lineage to which the children belong in woman-marriage. Should the cattle come from the 'house' of a married woman the children belong to the husband's lineage; if they come from the family of procreation of the woman the children take her father's surname. The queen and women who rule districts on behalf of a deceased or non-existent brother are called 'husband'

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such a quarrel involves the mother rather than the son and the whole house hives off, the son taking his mother with him.

The birth of the first child is an important step in the development of a house. The Lobedu child is born in a homestead in which there are at least three generations represented—that of the grandmother, that of the parents, including usually also the father's brothers and unmarried sisters and that of his own contemporaries. The first child is tended largely by the father's mother while the mother goes about the hard work of stamping, working in the fields, fetching firewood if there are no young sisters of the husband to help, and cooking.

The husband's mother is an essential part of the household and has a dominating influence. She controls and advises her son, especially in regard to his relations with his wife and the needs of his children, and he usually defers to her knowledge and experience. Long after her sons are married and even when they have grandchildren the unit is known as her *mosha* (house). It would seem that a unit of husband, wife and child would hardly be viable in a subsistence economy based predominantly on the agricultural activities of the women. Even the smallest Lobedu homestead includes the husband's mother. It is only when there are several adolescent children or the cash earnings of the husband enable a wife to buy the staple food instead of relying wholly upon what she grows herself that smaller units can survive. Even then they generally live near, and attach themselves to, some relative.

Once children are born, the wife's brother (mother's brother to the children) begins to play a part in forging links between them and the relatives on the mother's side. He will give gifts to the sister's son (*muduhulu*) who often goes to stay for a while with his mother's people; and in his turn the sister's son whenever he returns from migrant labour will be expected to give a gift to his mother's brother. Sometimes he also helps a mother's brother with cattle to marry. As the size of a man's family increases more fields may be needed to feed the children and very often these are obtained by the wife from her own people.

The marriage of the first daughter brings about the first acquisition by the developing house of a large amount of property in bride-price and ensures, even in the absence of sons, the continuation of the house. As important is the fact

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592 that the man has now a son-in-law, whom he can approach for
571 economic help whenever he is in need. His wife, too, if she
606 needs anything can brew beer to take as *khirola* for her son-in-law, or crack open *morula* nuts and take them as a gift, in return for which he will give her money or whatever he can. *Khirola* may be taken even to the uterine brother of a son-in-law for
[602] he also is a *muduhulu*. A man looks more and more to his affines for economic help as his father ages and his brothers become involved in their own commitments. To the wife the marriage of her daughter is also very important for a different reason. This makes it possible for her to have a daughter-in-law. For on the marriage of her son a woman stops cooking and in addition has the help of her daughter-in-law in her garden work. If she has no son she can in the last resort always use the bride-price to 'marry' a girl herself who will relieve her of the most heavy and onerous household and agricultural work.

592 With the marriage of his sons there is a gradual handing
571 over of the reins to the younger generation which is completed by the man's death, when the eldest son of his chief wife takes over his position and responsibilities. This is the point at which the house achieves its final independence economically (though not ritually).

613 It is interesting to note that Lobedu do not, like the Zulu,
562 identify a lineage segment by its female foundress.

Death and Inheritance

768 On the death of a wife her husband must administer the affairs
593 of her 'house' to its best advantage. If the children have any
[604] complaints they may, if their grandparents are dead, make them to the father's cattle-linked sister or to his eldest uterine sister who has considerable influence as 'priestess' of the family.
[593] If the father marries a woman with the cattle of the daughter of such a 'house' such wife will be attached to this house and the sons of the house could use the marriage cattle of the daughters of this woman to obtain wives.

768 When a married woman dies leaving very young children they are generally sent either to the mother's mother or to her sister to be reared. M's son and son's wife died in close succession leaving very young children. Shortly after, when his own

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the court cases. Later, when the heir came of age, a new homestead was built. When Mabulana died in the 1940's his daughter, a married woman who does not live in the area was made official district head. Her mother's brother came specially from the Capital to live in the area and help her by conducting cases.

The mother's brother is considered to be eminently suitable as adviser to a ruler. The queen, too, traditionally has a mother's brother as chief councillor. A mother's brother has no claim to succession yet is deeply interested in the welfare of his sister's child. He will see to it that the sister's child gets his rights. The position of the son of the *khadi* who is acting as regent is somewhat different. There is a Lobedu proverb saying '*Bya thoga monye bo dula muduhulu*—where a master is lacking there sits the nephew'. And it is true that the son of a woman regent is often ruler in all but name. In the 1930's there were two blatant cases in which the rightful heirs of district heads who had long reached man's estate seemed in danger of permanently being ousted. In both cases in the long run when the *khadi* died the rightful heir was installed, in one of the cases on the expressed dying wish of the *khadi*. Right seems to prevail in the long run.

The Homestead Through Time

Basically a homestead consists of a group of 'houses' belonging to the wives of the head or of the head and his half-brothers. Other relatives may attach themselves to it but the core remains the group of agnates.

Many of the smaller homesteads that have all the appearance of being independent are found upon investigation to be portions (a 'house') of a neighbouring homestead, which has become separated in space but still considers itself part and acknowledges the authority and control of the senior homestead near by. The most obvious case of this arises where, owing to quarrels between co-wives, a husband has placed one of the wives in a homestead of her own and visits her there. If a wife has a married son then in the event of serious quarrels there is more likely to be a hiving off, the son moving to a different area with his mother and siblings.

In Figure 5 a very small homestead is shown. Here the